CIVIC AFFAIRS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 22 June 2026
5.35 - 6.42 pm

Present: Councillors McPherson (Chair), Toye Scott (Vice-Chair), Ashton, Davison and Taylor

In Attendance: Councillors Bennett and Flaubert

Officers:
Chief Financial Officer: Jody Etherington
Chief Audit Executive: Jonathan Tully
Democratic Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer): Dan Kalley
Democratic Services Officer: Matthew Hussey

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

26/25Civ Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dalzell and Wade

26/26Civ Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

26/27Civ Minutes - 19 May 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

26/28Civ Public Questions

There were no public questions.

26/29Civ Internal Audit Update

The Committee received a report from the Chief Audit Executive.

The Chief Audit Executive said the following in response to Members' questions:

- The review of Bank Reconciliation - Recuring Payments recognised fraud risk-based intelligence that other Local Authorities had been targeted. A new fraud risk relating to controls of recurring payments had been identified and added to the corporate risk register. A prompt implementation date was agreed for the action in the review.
- Long term timescales were in place for Assurance Plans. However, the Council would need to be flexible and adapt plans in response to LGR.
- Steps were being taken to mitigate the impact of LGR and ensure Local Authorities were not working in silos and avoid high level impacts.
- In regard to specific risks of LGR within audit planning context, these could potentially be classed as 'Control Stability' – areas with increased risk during significant change and needed to 'keep the ship running' for example key systems; 'Transformation' – areas which support LGR process, and 'Readiness' – areas which if not ready could impact the change and transition.
- Net Zero, Carbon, Climate Change and Environment Implications of the report were classed as 'none' due to no change from previous report. Agreed they were 'minor, in the context of flexible working across multiple sites.
- Use of agentics referred to development of AI systems to support routine tasks with minimal risks and increased insight.
- The forward plan included a follow-up review of HRA - Safety - Fire which was a limited assurance review; and we would review the improved system which was being implemented.
- The council would work with recruitment and training providers to appoint apprenticeships under the new revised Institute of Internal Auditors Apprenticeship Scheme.

Resolved: (i) That the quarterly update on Governance Risk and Internal Control report be noted.

(ii) That the annual progress update be noted.

(iii) That the Annual Plan of Work as set out at Appendix A be approved.

(iv) That the Internal Audit Charter as set out at Appendix B be approved.

(v) That the Code of Ethics as set out at Appendix C be noted.

26/30Civ Constitution Updates

The Committee received a report from the Head of Governance & Democracy (Deputy Monitoring Officer) in regard to minor amendments to the Constitution around speaking rights for Group Leaders at Cabinet and the guillotine in relation to formal meetings of the Council including Full Council.

The Head of Governance & Democracy (Deputy Monitoring Officer) said the following in response to Members' questions:

- Two groups would receive an allowance as main opposition groups.
- In response to concerns that the Guillotine prevented detailed discussion of agenda items, it would be difficult to pre-plan agendas so officers did not know what Members would discuss in detail.
- The area around allowances would require further review.

At the Chairs discretion, Councillor Flaubert proposed the following amendment to the Glossary: Main Opposition Parties. The Current wording was:

'Where the Council operates under a minority administration, any opposition political group whose membership comprises at least 20% of the total number of councillors shall be recognised as a Main Opposition Group and shall be treated as such for all purposes relating to the Council's governance arrangements, decision-making structures, and constitutional provisions'

The Proposed addition wording was:

'For the purposes of Cabinet speaking rights and participation in governance arrangements, any formally constituted opposition political group comprising three or more councillors shall be treated as an Opposition Group.'

This amendment was intended to ensure that recognised opposition groups have meaningful and proportionate rights within Cabinet proceedings, and to provide a more inclusive and future-proof framework that does not rely solely on a percentage-based threshold.

The Chair suggested that Councillors take away the above proposed amendment back to their relevant political groups and Group Leaders email their position back to the Head of Governance & Democracy (Deputy Monitoring Officer).

Cllr Bennett proposed a recommendation to Full Council requesting explicit detail on Financial Allowances be included in the Constitution.

Resolved (unanimously) (i) To recommend to Full Council the changes to the Constitution as set out at Paragraph 4.1 to the report.

(ii) That Group Leader respond with their position on the proposed additional wording suggested by Councillor Flaubert via email to Head of Governance & Democracy (Deputy Monitoring Officer).

(iii) That Full Council be requested to include explicit detail on Financial Allowances in the Constitution.

The meeting ended at 6.42 pm

CHAIR